

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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P 241349Z MAY 76

FM USDEL MBFR VIENNA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1575

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 3 MBFR VIENNA 0223

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: BILATERAL DISCUSSION WITH SOVIET REPS
ON MAY 21, 1976

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: AT INVITATION OF SOVIETS, US REP AND
DEPREP MET WITH SOVIET REPS KHLESTOV AND SHUSTOV ON
MAY 21. DISCUSSION CONSISTED MAINLY OF GENERAL SUMMARY OF
STATUS OF VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS AS VIEWED BY EACH SIDE.
KHLESTOV'S REMARKS SHED NO NEW LIGHT ON THE SOVIET POSITION
OR ON THE POSSIBILITY OF SOVIET MOVES DURING THE ROUND.
KHLESTOV SAID MOSCOW AUTHORITIES IN REVIEWING STATUS OF
NEGOTIATIONS HAD CONSIDERED LAST ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS
USEFUL, BUT HAD BEEN DISAPPOINTED AT CONTINUED UNWILLINGNESS
OF WESTERN EUROPEANS TO COMMIT THEMSELVES TO A SPECIFIC
TIMING OF THEIR SECOND STAGE REDUCTION COMMITMENTS. MOSCOW
CONSIDERED U.S. PARTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS UNSATISFACTORY SITUATION.
MOSCOW AUTHORITIES ALSO CONTINUED TO FEEL THAT PROPOSED
WESTERN REDUCTIONS OF US INDIVIDUAL SOLDIERS DID NOT OFFSET
WITHDRAWAL OF AN ENTIRE SOVIET TANK ARMY.

2. US REP REVIEWED REASONS WHY PRESENT WESTERN REDUCTION
PROPOSALS OFFSET WHAT WEST WAS ASKING FROM THE EAST. HE SAID
THAT WHILE SOVIETS MIGHT BE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN REDUCTIONS

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ALONG THE LINES THEY THEMSELVES HAD PROPOSED, THERE WAS

GROWING SKEPTICISM IN WEST THAT SOVIETS WERE GENUINELY INTERESTED IN A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. THE WEST HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT DEPARTURE FROM ITS ORIGINAL POSITION WITH ITS DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL. THE EASTERN SUGGESTION OF 19 FEBRUARY WAS NOT OF COMPARABLE IMPORTANCE AND DID NOT EVIDENCE ANY DESIRE TO MOVE AWAY FROM ORIGINAL, UNACCEPTABLE EASTERN POSITION ON REDUCTIONS WHICH WOULD CONTRACTUALIZE EASTERN GROUND FORCE SUPERIORITY. THE SOVIETS STILL OWED THE WEST A SERIOUS ANSWER TO THE DECEMBER 16 WESTERN NUCLEAR REDUCTION PROPOSAL AND THEY SHOULD TABLE DATA. BOTH ACTIONS WERE NECESSARY TO ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY OF VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS AS HAVING POTENTIAL FOR ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME.

3. KHLESTOV GAVE NO DIRECT ANSWER TO THESE POINTS. HE RETURNED REPEATEDLY TO THE QUESTION OF TIMING OF STAGE 2 WESTERN EUROPEAN REDUCTIONS, IMPLYING BUT NOT STATING THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKE MOVEMENT ON THIS ISSUE FIRST BEFORE MAKING ANY MOVE OF THEIR OWN. HE DID NOT MENTION THE FORCE DEFINITION ISSUE.

4. US REP BRIEFED MEMBERS OF AD HOC GROUP ON ABOVE LINES IN MAY 24 AHG MEETING. END SUMMARY.

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5. KHLESTOV SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO REPORT SOME ASPECTS OF EVALUATION MADE DURING THE RECESS BY SOVIET AUTHORITIES OF THE VIENNA TALKS. AS REGARDS EVALUATION OF THE PREVIOUS ROUND, THE MOSCOW ASSESSMENT WAS THAT THE ROUND HAD CONTAINED POSITIVE ELEMENTS. THE DISCUSSIONS HAD BECOME MORE CONCRETE AND SPECIFIC AND THERE HAD BEEN SOME ATTEMPTS TO BRING THE APPROACHES OF THE SIDES CLOSER TOGETHER. AS US REP RECOLLECTED, THIS HAD BEEN THE ASSESSMENT OF THE SOVIET DELEGATION, BUT IT WAS ALSO SHARED BY SOVIET LEADERS. SOVIET LEADERS CONSIDERED CONTINUED COOPERATION WITH THE US ON THE VIENNA TALKS IMPORTANT. IF THE US AND SOVIETS COULD AGREE, A SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME WOULD BE POSSIBLE. TO THE EXTENT THAT AGREEMENT HAD BEEN REACHED TO REDUCE THE FORCES OF THE US AND THE USSR IN A FIRST PHASE, THIS SHOULD PROVIDE A GOOD BASIS FOR FURTHER PROGRESS IN THE TALKS.

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6. KHLESTOV SAID THAT, ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE, SOVIET AUTHORITIES HAD BEEN COMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED AT THE COOL WESTERN RESPONSE TO THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL. THEY HAD EXPECTED A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE. NONETHELESS, SOVIET LEADERS CONTINUED TO TAKE THE VIENNA TALKS SERIOUSLY AND DESIRED TO FIND A SOLUTION ON A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR AGREEMENT. HOWEVER, THEY BELIEVED THAT REDUCTIONS SHOULD

BE MUTUAL AND NOT ONE-SIDED.

7. KHESTOV CONTINUED THAT, IN THIS CONTEXT, THE FACT THE FRG AND OTHER WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES HAD REFUSED TO ESTABLISH A FIXED TIME LIMIT FOR THEIR SECOND STAGE REDUCTIONS HAD MADE A PARTICULARLY NEGATIVE IMPRESSION ON MOSCOW AUTHORITIES. IT LOOKED AS THOUGH THESE COUNTRIES REALLY WERE REFUSING TO REDUCE THEIR ARMED FORCES. IN THIS CONNECTION, A QUESTION HAD ARISEN CONCERNING THE US ATTITUDE ON THIS QUESTION. SOVIET AUTHORITIES BELIEVED THAT IF THE US WERE DETERMINED ABOUT THESE SECOND PHASE REDUCTIONS, THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WOULD FOLLOW THE VIEW OF THE US. THE MOSCOW VIEW WAS THAT ESTABLISHING A FIXED DATE FOR SECOND PHASE REDUCTIONS WOULD DEFINITELY CONTRIBUTE TO A FAVORABLE OUTCOME OF THE VIENNA TALKS. IN SUM, THE MOSCOW BELIEF WAS THAT DESPITE SOME NEGATIVE ASPECTS AND DESPITE THE FACT THAT NO SPECIFIC PROGRESS WAS REGISTERED, THE PREVIOUS ROUND HAD BEEN USEFUL AND IF THINGS COULD CONTINUE MOVING IN THE SAME DIRECTION, THIS WOULD BE POSITIVE.

8. KHESTOV CONTINUED THAT, IN THIS SENSE, THE SOVIETS EXPECTED THE WEST TO DEVELOP SOME OF ITS POSITIONS POSITIVELY. AS AN EXAMPLE, THE WESTERN PROPOSAL THAT THE SOVIETS SHOULD WITHDRAW A WHOLE TANK ARMY FROM CENTRAL EUROPE WHILE WITHDRAWING US SOLDIERS AS INDIVIDUALS WAS DEFINITELY NOT IN BALANCE AS REGARDS THE BURDENS AND BENEFITS TO BOTH SIDES. THE SOVIETS HOPED WESTERN PARTICIPANTS WOULD SHOW A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE POSITION ON THIS AND SIMILAR MATTERS DURING THE PRESENT ROUND.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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9. US REP SAID HE TOO THOUGHT THE PAST ROUND HAD HAD SOME PLISITIVE ASPECTS IN THE SENSE THAT IT FHAD BEEN MORE CONCRETE. THOSE IN WASHINGTON WHO FOLLOWED THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS HAD, HOWEVER, BEEN DISAPPOINTED BECUASE IT HAD APPEARED TO THEM THAT THE SOVIETS HAD RECOGNIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEEDING TO DISCUSS FIGURES ON ACTIVE DUTY FORCES IN THE AREA, BUT HAD THEN STOPPED SHORT OF ACTUALLY DOING THIS. THE US HAD THOUGHT THAT THE SOVIETS HAD RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO DISCUSS FIGURES AFTER TWO-AND-ONE HALF YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS.

10. US REP CONTINUED THAT, AS REGARDS THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL, US AUTHORITIES RECOGNIZED THAT IT INCLUDED SOME POLISTIVE MODIFICATIONS OF THE SOVIET POSITION WITH RESPECT TO THE SEQUENCE OF REDUCTIONS IN THE SENSE THAT IT EXPLICITLY RECOGNIZED, FOLLOWING EARLIER INFORMAL MENTION OF THIS, THAT THERE MIGHT BE TWO SEPARATE AGREEMENTS. BUT IN GENERAL THERE WAS DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL BECAUSE IT WAS NOT FELT THAT IT WAS A SERIOUS ANSWER TO THE SIGNIFICANT WESTERN PROPOSAL OF DECEMBER 16. THE FEBRUARY 19 EASTERN PROPOSAL MADE NO CHANGE IN THE ORIGINAL EASTERN POSITION AS REGARDED REDUCTIONS. ITS EFFECT WOULD STILL BE TO CONTRACTUALIZE THE UNEQUAL RELATIONSHIP OF GROUND FORCE PERSONNEL IN THE REDUCTION AREA.

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11. US REP SAID HE WAS SURE KHLESTOV REALIZED AND HE HOPED SOVIET LEADERS HAD COME TO REALIZE THAT AN AGREEMENT WHICH CONTRACTUALIZED THE EASTERN RIGHT TO HAVE MORE GROUND FORCE PERSONNEL AND A HUGE TANK OVERHANG IN THE AREA WAS AN UNACCEPTABLE BASIS FOR AGREEMENT. IN THE COMMNETS HE HAD JUST MADE, KHLESTOV HAD SIAD MOSCOW AUTHORITIES CONSIDERED VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD SEEK A MUTUAL AND NOT ONE-SIDED REDUCTION, AND KHLESTOV HAD GONE ON TO SAY THAT INDIVIDUAL REDUCTIONS BY THE US WERE NOT THE EQUIVALENT

OF A SOVIET TANK ARMY. BUT, AS WESTERN REPS HAD TRIED TO MAKE CLEAR TO KHLESTOV AND AS HE ASSUMED KHLESTOV UNDERSTOOD, IN JUDGING REDUCTION APPROACHES, ONE HAD TO LOOK AT THE WHOLE PACKAGE. ONE SHOULD NOT LOOK ONLY AT REDUCTIONS BUT ALSO AT THE RESIDUAL FORCE LIMITATIONS WHICH WOULD CONTINUE IN EFFECT FOR A LONG TIME TO COME. AS WESTERN REPS HAD POINTED OUT, LIMITATIONS WOULD BEAR MORE HEAVILY ON NATO FORCES OF INTEREST TO THE WARSAW PACT THAN THEY WOULD BEAR ON THE WARSAW PACT FORCES OF INTEREST TO THE US. WHEN THESE FACTORS WERE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, PLUS THE ADDITIONAL REDUCTIONS THE WEST HAD PROPOSED ON DECEMBER 16, THEN IT WAS QUITE CLEAR THAT THE WEST WAS PROPOSING REASONABLY BALANCED REDUCTIONS.

12. KHLESTOV SAID HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND US REP'S CHARACTERIZATION OF THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL AS AN INADEQUATE RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL. US REP SAID THE SOVIETS HAD MADE SOME MOVEMENT ON THE SEQUENCE OF AGREEMENTS, BUT NOT ON THE CENTRAL ISSUE OF REDUCTIONS ON WHICH THE DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION. SOVIET FAILURE AFTER 5 MONTHS TO GIVE A SERIOUS RESPONSE TO THE DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL WAS CREATING SOME SKEPTICISM AS TO SOVIET INTEREST IN A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE AGREEMENT. US REPS RECOGNIZED THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY SOVIET DELEGATION TO GOOD WORKING ATMOSPHERE IN THE VIENNA TALKS. IT ALSO SEEMED ALONG THE LINES OF ITS OWN EASTERN PROPOSALS. BUT REALLY WANTING AN OUTCOME MEANT WILLINGNESS TO MOVE TO A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE OUTCOME. THERE WAS SKEPTICISM ON THIS BECAUSE OF THE ABSENCE OF A SERIOUS EASTERN RESPONSE TO THE WESTERN DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL AND BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT, AFTER TWO AND ONE HALF YEARS OF DISCUSSION, THE SOVIETS WERE NOT YET
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WILLING TO ENTER INTO A SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF BASIC FIGURES. IF THE SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN DEMONSTRATING THAT THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS WERE VIABLE AND ACTUALLY HAD THE POTENTIALITY OF AN OUTCOME, THEY SHOULD GIVE A SERIOUS RESPONSE TO THE DECEMBER 16 PROPOSAL AND TABLE FIGURES ON ALL THEIR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PERSONNEL.

13. KHLESTOV ASKED, COULD THE SOVIETS EXPECT THE WEST TO INDICATE A FIXED TIME LIMIT FOR THE SECOND PHASE? SECOND, COULD THEY EXPECT THE WEST TO INDICATE THAT IT WAS WILLING TO MAKE COMMITMENTS ON THE SCOPE OF PHASE 2 REDUCTIONS? SHUSTOV SAID THIS WAS AN IMPORTANT QUESTION FOR THE SOVIETS. THEY HAD JUST EXPRESSED THEIR WILLINGNESS TO MAKE THEIR REDUCTIONS FIRST. BUT FOR THIS TO WORK, THEY NEEDED ASSURANCES THAT OTHERS WOULD MOVE IN THE SECOND PHASE. THIS ISSUE WAS IMPORTANT TO MOSCOW.

14. US REP ASKED, IF THERE WERE SUCH TIMING COMMITMENTS FROM THE WEST, COULD THE WEST EXPECT ASSURANCES THAT THE SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO REDUCE THEIR FORCES TO AN EQUAL LEVEL OF GROUND FORCE MANPOWER IN THE AREA? KHLESTOV SAID US REP'S QUESTION WAS COMPLEX AND DEALT WITH THE MAIN ISSUES OF PRINCIPLE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS WHERE POSITIONS WERE OPPOSED.

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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15. US REP SAID KHLESTOV'S QUESTION HAD ALSO BEEN ONE OF PRINCIPLE. PERHAPS THE STAGE HAD NOT YET COME WHERE THE SOVIETS WERE READY TO ACT ON QUESTIONS OF PRINCIPLE. IF SO, WHY DID THE SOVIETS EXPECT THE WEST TO MOVE FIRST ON ISSUES OF THIS KIND? IF THE SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO DISCUSS COMMITMENTS, THEN KHLESTOV SHOULD ANSWER THE QUESTION US REP HAD RAISED. KHLESTOV SAID, APPARENTLY, US REP WAS SAYING THAT IF SOVIETS TABLED FIGURES, THEN THE WEST WOULD DEAL WITH COMMITMENTS ON AMOUNT AND TIMING OF STAGE 2 REDUCTIONS.

16. US REP SAID THAT IF THE SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO AGREE TO REDUCE TO A COLLECTIVE COMMON CEILING, THIS ISSUE COULD BE DISCUSSED.

17. US DEPREP SAID THAT AS FAR AS HE COULD DETERMINE PERSONALLY, FOR TWO-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS, THE SOVIETS HAD DEALT ONLY IN ATMOSPHERICS OR IN SMALL TACTICAL MOVES DESIGNED TO MAINTAIN A GOOD ATMOSPHERE IN VIENNA. SUCH AN APPROACH WAS UNDERSTANDABLE AT THE OUTSET OF NEGOTIATIONS. BUT THE VIENNA TALKS HAD DEVELOPED TO A POINT WHERE ATMOSPHERICS WERE NOT ENOUGH. THE EASTERN FEBRUARY 19 PROPOSAL HAD JUST BEEN A TIME FILLER, NOT A SERIOUS ANSWER TO THE DECEMBER 16 WESTERN PROPOSAL. IF THE SOVIETS WERE INTERESTED IN AN OUTCOME, IT
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WAS UP TO THEM TO TAKE SPECIFIC ACTION TO PROVE THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS WERE VIABLE. IF NOT, SKEPTICISM WOULD INCREASE IN THE WEST AND THE PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS WOULD RECEDE.

18. KHLESTOV SAID THIS MIGHT BE US REPS' EVALUATION OF THE SITUATION, BUT THE SOVIET ESTIMATE WAS A DIFFERENT ONE. THERE WAS SOME GROUNDS TO BELIEVE THAT THE WESTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WERE NOT WILLING TO ASSUME GENUINE COMMITMENTS ON REDUCTIONS. THE US WAS WILLING TO REDUCE ITS FORCES BUT ONLY A SMALL PORTION OF THEM. BESIDES THE US WAS MAKING NO EFFORT TO INFLUENCE ITS WESTERN PARTNERS TO UNDERTAKE REDUCTION COMMITMENTS. THE WARSAW PTREATY COUNTRIES WERE READY AND WILLING TO REDUCE THEIR FORCES. WHEN THE SOVIET DELEGATION HAD CONFERRED WITH SOVIET PARTY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS, THE LATTER HAD MADE CLEAR THAT THEY HAD A SINCERE DESIRE TO REACH AGREEMENT AND REDUCE FORCES. SO IT WAS EVIDENT THAT THERE WERE TWO OPINIONS CONCERNING THE SITUATION IN THE NEGOTIATIONS.

19. US REP SAID IT WAS CLEAR THAT US AND SOVIET REPS WERE TALKING OF TWO DIFFERENT CATEGORIES OF ISSUES. ONE CATEGORY WAS FACTS -- SPECIFIC FIGURES ON THE FORCES IN THE AREA. THE SECOND CATEGORY WAS COMMITMENTS TO BE UNDERTAKEN IN AGREEMENTS TO DEAL WITH THOSE FACTS. IT WAS NORMAL AND LOGICAL TO DEAL FIRST WITH THE FACTS WHICH WOULD DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF THE COMMITMENTS. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY TRUE SINCE THE NEGOTIATIONS HAD GONE ON FOR TWO-AND-ONE-HALF YEARS. THEN FROM THE FACTS, ONE NORMALLY MOVED TO COMMITMENTS RELATED TO THOSE FACTS. TO ASK FOR COMMITMENTS BEFORE ONE GOT THE FACTS WAS THE WRONG SEQUENCE.

20. KHLESTOV ASKED WHETHER THE CURRENT NATO MINISTERIAL MEETING WOULD CULMINATE IN ANY PROPOSALS FROM THE NATO COUNTRIES DESIGNED TO CONTRIBUTE TO PROGRESS IN THE VIENNA TALKS. US REP SAID THE STATUS OF THE VIENNA TALKS HAD BEEN REPORTED TO THE NATO MINISTERS AND WOULD BE DISCUSSED. HE BELIEVED THAT THEIR CONCLUSIONS WOULD BE MUCH LIKE THOSE HE HAD PRESENTED ALREADY, THAT NATO HAD ALREADY TAKEN A VERY IMPORTANT MOVE -- THE MOST SERIOUS MOVE SINCE THE

TALKS HAD BEGUN; THE SOVIETS HAD MADE A RESPONSE, BUT IT
WAS NOT ONE COMMENSURATE IN IMPORTANCE AND SO THEY STILL
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OWED THE WEST A SERIOUS REPOSE TO THE DECEMBER 16
PROPOSAL. WESTERN AUTHORITIES WOULD ALSO BE CONCERNED BY
EASTERN FAILURE TO TABLE DATA. WESTERN AUTHORITIES WOULD
WISH TO CONTINUE THE VIENNA NEGOTIATIONS BUT WOULD HAVE
THESE POINTS IN MIND AS THE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED.

21. US DEPREP SAID THE SOVIETS SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT THE
WEST WAS INTERESTED IN AN UNENDING MARATHON NEGOTIATION
IN WHICH ATMOSPHERICS TOOK THE PLACE OF ACTION. WESTERN
OPINION WANTED TO SEE RESULTS OR THERE WOULD BE GROWING
SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE VIENNA TALKS.

22. KHLESTOV SAID THIS MIGHT BE A TREND IN PUBLIC OPINION,
BUT THAT THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT RESULTS SHOULD BE
ACHIEVED. THERE WAS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE BUT TO CONTINUE
TO TALK AND TRY TO SEEK SOLUTIONS.

23. US REP ASKED KHLESTOV WHAT HIS FORECAST WAS FOR THE
COMING ROUND. KHLESTOV SAID HE EXPECTED MUTUAL EFFORTS TO
BRING THE POSITIONS CLOSER. SOVIET REPS WANTED TO
ELABORATE SOME NEW THOUGHTS OR "INVENTION" IF US DELEGATION
WOULD HELP. BUT THEY ALSO EXPECTED US AND WESTERN REPS
TO TAKE A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE APPROACH. END NOFORN. RESOR

NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED DEFENSE.

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